

Message from the Chief

Chief's Memo – March 13, 2006

Leadership and Decision Making

What is leadership? Why do some people choose to move into leadership positions in organizations and others do not? Why do some people become formal leaders and others become informal leaders? What characteristics are necessary to lead? There are many books written on the subject of leadership and how to become a better leader or how to lead organizations.



In this week's memo I would like to share my personal philosophy of leadership. First, and logically, to be a leader you must have people willing to follow. This makes "leadership" distinguishable from "managing." Managing organizations, while necessary, is very different from leading organizations. One "manages" projects, schedules, tasks, budgets, programs, and things. One "leads" people. But, why and when will people follow?

It is my belief that people are willing to follow when they are inspired to do so. People are inspired when there is a shared vision or a common mission. People will follow when they know that their leaders care more about them than they do about themselves. People will follow leaders who struggle through adversity for the common good of the team. People will follow when they are empowered by their leaders to help reach a common and well-defined goal. People will follow when you believe in them.

While I have read many books about leadership I have had the opportunity to learn from leaders in my personal life. Two role models in my life have been my uncle, Jim Plunkett, and my brother, Bill Grijalva.

Jim Plunkett won the Heisman Trophy in 1970 while quarterbacking Stanford to a Rose Bowl victory. In 1971, he was named the NFL Rookie of the Year while playing for the New England Patriots. He later led the Oakland Raiders and the Los Angeles Raiders to Superbowl victories in 1981 and 1984.

What many people do not know about Jim is the adversity that he had to overcome to become the Raider's leader and attain their many accomplishments. Jim's parents, my grandparents, were both blind. He was raised in a humble neighborhood in East San Jose. At Stanford, he fought and overcame a scare with a tumor in his neck and a desire by the coaching staff to move him out of the quarterback position. After a few successful years with the Patriots, he was

traded to the San Francisco 49ers. He was released by the 49ers after a few seasons of being physically trampled by NFL defenses. Jim's confidence was gone and his career was over.

But, Oakland Raiders owner Al Davis believed in Jim. He picked him up as a back-up quarterback and gave him time to regain his health and his confidence. For the next few years, Jim put his coach and his teammates first. He did whatever was asked to make the team better. He worked hard physically and mentally to make the Raiders an NFL powerhouse.

Through all the adversity and challenges Jim did not allow the fame, fortune, and success to change him. He was a leader who cared more about the success of the team than his own personal success. Today, Jim is not in the NFL Hall of Fame. But, he remains in the hearts of all his teammates, coaches, and fans.

My brother, Bill Grijalva, is the one who encouraged me to pursue a career in law enforcement, which eventually led me to my fire service career. He was just out of the Oakland Police Department (OPD) Academy when I was going into college. Early in his career he became active with the OPD union and became an informal leader in the organization. He fought for better working conditions and better input into organizational decisions. As sometimes happens, his views cost him organizational advancement. But, Bill was happy to fight for his fellow officers.

In 1993, after nearly 20 years on the OPD, Bill was walking a beat in West Oakland. The Oakland businessmen and businesswomen loved Bill on his beat that he served so well. On December 15th Bill heard a fellow officer responding on a call to assist Animal Control on a pit bull dog complaint. He also heard that there was no back-up officer available to respond. While it is unusual for a foot patrol officer to back-up a motor officer on a call, Bill was concerned that the other officer may need help, so he jumped in his car and answered up on the call.

Upon arrival, Bill and his partner discovered that Animal Control wanted to take a pit bull dog into custody that was suspected of biting someone a day earlier. The dog owner was refusing to allow the officers to take the dog. After explaining to the dog owner that his refusal to allow Animal Control to take the pit bull for rabies testing would be considered interfering with peace officers in performance of their duty, the dog owner was placed under arrest.

As he was being taken into custody the suspect broke free and ran into his house with my brother and his partner in foot pursuit. As the suspect entered the front door he obtained a shotgun just inside and shot my brother as he entered. My brother and his partner returned fire and killed the suspect. My brother died of his shotgun wounds on the way to the hospital that day.

Bill chose to be on that call that day. Bill chose to help his fellow officer. Bill and his partner had a common mission. For that matter, Bill chose public safety as his career 20 years earlier. Bill cared more about others than he did about himself. Bill led by his example.

My point here is that you can learn about leadership through books, courses, and educational opportunities. But, you can also learn about leadership through your personal relationships, mentors, and life experiences. I always try to learn from those around me.

CDF is a great organization because there are so many examples of leadership and leaders in this organization. I have the opportunity to meet many of you in past two months. I have seen the dedication that employees continue to have in the face of difficult times, and I am inspired by all of you.

Today, CDF is facing a serious leadership crisis brought about by retirements and pay inversion for supervisors and managers. The picture remains unclear as answers are difficult to come by. Management and labor are working together to get the information needed. Recently, I have met with Department of Personnel Administration (DPA) staff to seek clarification and certainty on the applicable law. I am personally committed to providing the information employees need to make such important decisions.

Nonetheless, I understand and respect the difficult decisions that CDF leaders are making each day. As a result of recent information received from DPA, I have had a number of you tell me, "Chief, I don't want to retire, but I must make this decision for my family."

Secretary Chrisman and I are committed to working on solving these issues with DPA, Department of Finance, and the Governor's Office. While I cannot make any promises regarding the outcome, I can commit to making it one of my highest priorities. I wish you all the best.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Grijalva'.

Ruben Grijalva, Chief
Acting Director

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Staff is starting to process the 6,000 electronic comments, 200 public comment letters, and seven agency comment letters received by the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Report for Jackson Demonstration State Forest (JDSF). The initial estimate is that it will take six weeks or so to complete the response to comments. A number of the comments received are very lengthy and substantive, and it will require a lot of work to respond to them. Resource Management staff from Sacramento, Santa Rosa, JDSF, and staff from the Fire and Resource Assessment Program are helping with the development of responses.

The Board's Resource Protection Committee continued its discussion of the Range Management Advisory Committee's report on the department's Vegetation Management Program (VMP) and the Vegetation Management Programmatic Environmental Impact Report. The Committee appears to be moving toward a comprehensive review of the VMP. This review is likely to start with the recently revised Public Resources Code for VMP and move through Board regulations and policy, and continue with the Department's VMP manual and field guide. The Committee briefly discussed the importance of the linkages between VMP and Resource Management, Fire Protection, and the Fire Plan. The Committee decided to recommend to the Board that they accept the Lead Agency role for the Vegetation Management Programmatic EIR.

The Professional Foresters Examining Committee (PFEC) issued their written findings to the Board of Forestry this week regarding concerns raised by private consulting foresters over the number of unfiled Timber Harvest Plans (unacceptable plans). The PFEC report includes the following conclusion statement: *"An analysis of the 2005 plan return letters shows that almost in every instance, the non-filing of plans appears justified under present Forest Practice Law and Board regulations."* The PFEC also provided recommendations to improve communication between CDF and plan preparing RPFs as a means to help lower the return rate even further. CDF will be working in partnership with PFEC and report back to the Board in May or June as to progress that has been made.

The Society for California Archaeology (SCA) is going to honor CDF by presenting an award to CDF's Archaeology Team for the terrific work we have done during the past few years to protect archaeological sites during wildfire suppression on private lands. The award will be given during the Awards and Dinner Banquet of SCA's Annual Meeting in Ventura, California, on Friday night March 31, 2006. There has been an increasing level of interest and participation by the Native American groups recently in the THP review process, and they have requested CDF to offer training so they have a better understanding of how they might interface with CDF and participate in the THP Review process more effectively. In response to these requests, Dan Foster will be coordinating a series of training sessions to be delivered with the assistance of CDF's Region

Archaeologists. At this time, training is being planned in MEU, SHU or BTU, HUU, and FKU.

COMMUNICATIONS

The sixth episode of "It Could Happen Tomorrow", about the possibility of the largest wildfire California has ever seen, will premiere on The Weather Channel on Sunday, March 19, at 9:30 p.m. The series has been an amazing success for the network so far. Several CDF and OES officials were interviewed for the program.

MOBILE EQUIPMENT

Released six vehicles, one Model #34 to Riverside, one each Model #35 to Amador-El Dorado and San Benito-Monterey, one van to Tulare, one pick-up to Riverside and one sedan to the Fire Marshal's office.

The 4-x-4 cab and chassis for the next eight Model #34's to be manufactured by Placer Fire Equipment in Sacramento have arrived and the vendor was officially notified as to this on March 1. The long anticipated bid package for our next 42 Type 3 engines, 24 ECT Bodies and OES's 15 Type 3 engines was released for bid on March 8 and there will be a "mandatory" pre-bid conference for all interested bidders to be held at Davis Equipment Facility on March 28.